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THE TREATY OF GHENT

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON ITS ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH ANNIVERSARY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1914

BY

WILLIAM MILLIGAN SLOANE, LL.D.

NEW YORK
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY
1914

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PROCEEDINGS

At a meeting of The New York Historical Society, held in its Hall on Tuesday evening, November 17th, 1914, to celebrate the One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the Society.

The proceedings were opened with prayer by the Rev. William Montague Geer, S.T.D., Vicar of St. Paul's Chapel, New York.

The President addressed the Society on the history, progress and needs of the Institution.

The Anniversary Address, entitled: "The Treaty of Ghent," was delivered by William Milligan Sloane, LL.D., First Vice-President of the Society.

Upon the conclusion of the address Mr. Frederic Delano Weekes, with remarks, submitted the following resolution, which was adopted unanimously:

Resolved, That a vote of thanks be expressed to our distinguished First Vice-President, William Milligan Sloane, LL.D., for his most able and interesting address entitled: "The Treaty of Ghent," that has so happily commemorated to our mutual advantage and pleasure the One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of this Society, and that Dr. Sloane be requested to furnish the Society with a copy for publication.

The Society then adjourned.

Extract from the Minutes.

FANCHER NICOLL,
Recording Secretary.

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THE TREATY OF GHENT

CLIO is a stately Muse; but not destitute of humor. Infernal as are the many scenes through which she has, alas, too often to guide her steps, there are intervales of verdant pastures across which she strolls beside quiet waters, meditating the hidden meanings of circumstances and events. The obstinate inertia of social and political systems arouses the primitive passion for battle; what peaceful agitation cannot accomplish, war, grim and terrible, has so far in the record of history either granted or denied. This in peaceful perspective the historian is forced to admit. But what the gains and losses, and what the credit or debit balance is, has to be calculated in the council chamber, where treaties are made. The reckoning is not easy, for the ambition of the statesman and his ruses are comparable to those of the warrior, while personality tells far more in debate than in battle. The strategist works alone, the negotiator in contact with his antagonist. Without, the warfare has not ceased and every turn of fortune re-arranges on one day the conditions of the day before. In warfare there is a central power, in conference the dominance is fortuitous. The former rarely sees a fight without result; in the latter

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the closing hour of a weary day marks neither retreat nor advance. There are feints and armistices in both, but the plenipotentiary never unmasks. The document which has given us a century of peace with Great Britain is as perfect an example of diplomatic contest as the patient Clio has ever perused, both as a riddle to be read and a conjuncture of facts and persons flung together at haphazard to compose trouble, and write a public charter.

Among the pygmies who dominated Europe in the decline of Napoleon, the Czar Alexander was the showiest. By education a liberal, his sorry experiences had perverted him into a bigoted legitimist. His pseudo-piety rested on the temperament of a dreamer. The tortures of humiliating defeats in war and diplomacy rendered him as gloomy in disaster as he proved to be pompous and presumptuous in the hour of victory. The alliance into which he entered at Tilsit to bolster his own and Napoleon's absolutism was working badly and had proved unholy; his Egeria, Frau von Krudener, was a religious mystic; the sanction of his policies was any convenient distortion of Scripture. For the working of Metternich's system—intervention, suppression, reaction—a system of which Russia might become at once a stay and a strut, it was desirable that Napoleon's aggressions should end and that Great Britain

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should be able, unhampered, to co-operate. But Great Britain was very much absorbed in an exasperating Spanish peninsular war. Her naval supremacy was in no jeopardy as yet, but her military prestige was mounting and falling in Spain like the gauge in a leaky boiler. She was engaged, moreover, in a transoceanic war with us, a struggle for the ruin of our neutral commerce and the retention of supremacy in North America. This conflict was only in its initial stages but the stake was enormous and prognostics were far from favorable.

As for Alexander's own situation nothing could have appeared more desperate. We had declared war on June 18, 1812. Napoleon was invading Russia, winning battle after battle, and striking at her very heart on his way to Moscow, which he entered on September seventh. Alexander had denounced the French alliance just six months earlier and these were the consequences! Never was the necessity for concentrated British attention more imperative. During the same six months our military disasters were unbroken but our career of naval victory had begun. The ship duels were already eclipsing in blind terror the gains which armies were winning for England. It was at this juncture that Alexander proposed mediation between us and Great Britain, an action which so many Americans have regarded as inaugurating an international friendship between the most backward and the most advanced of the gigantic modern states. When Clio muses she must

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see the humorous side to the gratitude of a great, free people, for a tyrant's last resource to maintain himself.

Whatever her thoughts, we have to note the fact as an effort, futile indeed but an effort to compose the strife between us and Great Britain. Our minister at St. Petersburg, that excellent pedant John Quincy Adams, thought the offer a new indication of Russia's friendship; but had England been consulted? Yes, although as yet there was no response: it would certainly however be favorable, as was Adams' reply. The Czar's proposal was therefore forwarded post haste (five months was then post haste) to Washington where about March 9, 1813, it was accepted by Monroe with unseemly precipitancy in a state paper abounding in fulsome flattery to Alexander. Statesmen dearly loved a junket then as now and a commission to negotiate, as motley as a patch-work quilt, got itself appointed; Bayard and Gallatin, federalist and republican, sailed down the Delaware on May ninth. They were off for St. Petersburg to assist Adams in his work: three cooks to spoil the broth which one could have made palatable, provided always that he were ever to have the chance.

A musing Clio once again: Great Britain had imperiously refused Alexander's offer and when our cross match team, able, willing, kind but unbroken to their new harness (or any other diplomatic discipline), when Bayard and Gallatin arrived at Gothenburg in Sweden they found themselves suspended in mid air. Lord

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Castlereagh, quickly informed of their arrival, instantly told the British ambassador in Russia, Lord Cathcart, firmly to pray the Czar for inaction. But the Czar was in Bohemia, well nigh a thousand miles off, and when the dispatch was put into his hands, Napoleon's fall seemed imminent. Alexander's affection for America was forgotten and he expressed entire contentment with England's stand. Learning then of our legate's arrival he veered and renewed the offer. Meantime Castlereagh had also veered, several points; expressing in a second dispatch to Cathcart, willingness to treat with the American envoys but not under the Czar's good offices. The meeting might be at Gothenburg or London; it could not be at St. Petersburg; British public opinion was already exasperated; intervention in that or any other form of condescension would set fire to the thatch.

Meantime the allies had been defeated by Napoleon, whose fall now appeared less imminent, and the Czar had fled to Töplitz. At this place Russia was served with fine words and compliments, but notified that the American commissioners, by this time in Russia, must come to Gothenburg or London if they desired to follow the only possible course: to treat directly and without mediation with British commissioners. And so our grand but selfish Alexander disappears from the combination of circumstances which ultimately produced the prodigy known as the Treaty of Ghent. Early in

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November the British ultimatum reached Washington and was hurriedly accepted by Madison's administration, perplexed and bewildered by the chaotic public opinion of the hour about everything. From its two travelling negotiators it had no single dispatch or message; the President and his advisers were in total darkness as to the fact that the rather exasperated commission had departed from St. Petersburg; Gallatin indeed had failed of confirmation by the Senate. Madison, now assured however of co-operation from congress, addressed them both at the Russian capital, giving new instructions, announcing new commissions, and assuring strong support.

On January 25, 1814, the two migrating diplomats, acting on their knowledge and judgment, had left Russia, had travelled leisurely across northern Europe, and crossing from Amsterdam had reached London on the morrow of Napoleon's abdiction and banishment to Elba. City and country were aflame with vainglory. Europe saved and pacified, the American blot on the British scutcheon could now be totally erased and the despised, rebellious offspring beyond the seas brought to the feet of a haughty parent for correction. Three bodies of Wellington's peninsular veterans were dispatched to strengthen the British land forces: part to Canada, part to Washington, but the main force to seize New Orleans as a pawn for use in the tradings of an eventual peace negotiation. Another campaign

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more vigorous than the preceding must first be fought and then terms on the general basis of the *status ante bellum* would probably be the very best we could hope for. In this grim prospect there was nothing humorous; St. Petersburg, Gothenburg, the many splendid cities of the north, the entertainments of Amsterdam, the delights, the hardships and the chagrin of these travels at the public expense paled before the stern reality of an imperative but perplexing duty.

Meantime the commission had been enlarged and another junket organized: to the names of Bayard, Gallatin and Adams were added those of Henry Clay, a homespun, representative republican still, and Jonathan Russell, the new minister to Sweden. These with their retinue of secretaries, paid and volunteer, reached Gothenburg in time to learn that they were to proceed thence to Ghent, chosen finally, it appeared, as the seat of negotiations. This was another sign of Great Britain's humor, not to say temper, but suppliants could not command and by the last week in June, 1814, the American commission was assembled in the ancient, torpid city, lodged in a decent and commodious house still standing on the corner of two streets known (in Belgian French) as those of the Fields and the Fullers.

Suppliants, we felt ourselves to be; were we really that? By British severities we had been stung into a challenge for the consequences of which we were utter-

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ly unprepared and what with political generals, what with financial embarrassment, what with the disaffection and half-heartedness of the North and Northeast we were in a sorry plight when Bayard and Gallatin left home. By the time the commission reached Ghent matters had improved somewhat; there was discipline in our army and our many successful ship duels had done much to restore the national self-respect, while our privateers had become the terror of the seas; our victories on the lakes had been brilliant. Nevertheless we had suffered defeat and outrage, and taken as a whole our people were sullen and dispirited. The Atlantic seaboard was harassed by blockaders and landing parties, while a British fleet with five thousand troops was about to sail for the Potomac, the expedition which even before the peace-commissioners foregathered had destroyed our national capital and put our government to an ignominious flight. Yes, outwardly and apparently we were suppliants, and humble ones at that. Our envoys were treated as such, for they were left to cool their heels and pass the time in idle distractions as best they could for about two months before the British commission arrived in the silent, dreary, half forsaken, little town, a place of departed glories.

And what a contemptuous commission was the British, when it did arrive. Contemptible we might, in comparison with our own and from the stand-

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point of the present, be tempted to say. Bayard was a person of the highest distinction for statesmanship and breeding; as a Federalist he had opposed the war and was a masterly compromiser. Clay, the frontier radical and Republican, had hotly supported the war. Better known at the moment as a politician than as a statesman, he had the habits of his home, being careless in manner and a passionate gamester. Gallatin, another Republican, was the ablest negotiator of them all, thoroughly equipped by the education of books and of life for the leading part he played; a shrewd, daring, inscrutible man. When we say Adams, the sound connotes a power which for generations has passed in the stock; John Quincy possessed it, intellectually pedantic, cock-sure and prosy as he was. Like two of his colleagues he was a patrician, with manners and character. Russell too was dignified and an experienced public servant. In the rather humorous suite of secretaries and onhangers each of the principals found companionship to his liking, and sympathy as well, with one or more members throughout the weary weeks of idling, bickering, card playing, tippling, consulting and deciding. Though the individual commissioners were unsympathetic and jealous of each other, yet for the United States of 1814 the commission was alike important and representative.

The British commission, with its cool, imperti-

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nent assurance, dawdling for weeks before appearing on the scene, was quite otherwise from any point of view. The head of the trio was Gambier, an aging nonentity of fine presence, ennobled for his share in the nefarious bombardment of Copenhagen, twenty years earlier, and since then a placeman of no eminence. The second was Goulburn, a youngish and little-known scholar, whose unquestioned abilities had been recognized in the appointment he had received as virtual leader. The third was a certain William Adams, somebody's protégée, who though a learned doctor of civil law had so far been a nobody, and who remained a nobody at Ghent and thereafter. All three had the contemptuous, well-bred, exasperating air of their class, challenging nothing, revealing nothing, exacting nothing; but urging the letter of their bond.

At the distance of a century the imagination could fashion and represent nothing more humorous than this dual group, in which our men actually were bored to extinction by delay and uneasiness, while the others wore the mask of boredom with mere formalities, needlessly elaborate and dealing with far-off, indifferent trifles. Behind the British mask there was also, however, the deepest anxiety, for they knew they were only pawns of a cabinet, distracted by vacillation, alarmed by the terrible uncertainties of the continental questions pressing for settlement, and menaced by domestic upheaval in regard to taxation, radicalism,

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and a dumb social fury with the galling inhibitions on personal liberty impatiently endured for weary years only because of the Napoleonic menace. The day of reckoning with Tory tyranny and military restraints was already dawning. Blustering and preening as were the upper classes over the fall of Paris and their early successes in America, national common sense was temporarily obscured; but those for whom power was an end in itself were not fooled for a moment, and such exactly were the keen adventurers at the helm of State.

Throughout July and well into August the American commissioners amused themselves as best they could in their hired house, where they lodged and boarded and had their offices. Furious at the prolonged delay, and humiliated by the amused condescension of all observers their daily intercourse was far from harmonious. In particular the all-night card parties of Clay, his inelegant table manners, and his undisguised defiance of Adams' petulance went far to create a breach in the American ranks. On Saturday, August seventh, the British arrived, and took lodgings at the Golden Lion; after the manner of ambassadors dealing with ministers of inferior rank they at once notified our representatives of their readiness to receive them. This insult restored harmony in the American home. The experienced Adams showed the bitterest resentment and the others, except the calm Gallatin, were prepared for any extreme. It was the latter who conceived the clever retort

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eventually sent: that the Americans would meet the British at any time and at any place mutually convenient, preferably the Netherlands Hotel.

It was a master stroke, our diplomacy won the first point; and when our envoys arrived next day at the appointed time and place the others were on hand to receive them with courtesy, though not with grace. Gambier was a religious precisian but an ecclesiastical gentleman; Goulburn, destined to end his great career as Chancellor of the Exchequer, attained distinction in spite of his rude ways; while Adams, an admirable lawyer with no experience in international affairs, overplayed his rôle and was rather too brusque and glum. Without delay the British terms, based presumably on their successes of the previous year, and the presumptive success of the current summer, were coldly presented. As two conditions antecedent were the inclusion as parties to the negotiation, or rather the final, general pacification, of the Indians allied with Great Britain and the creation of a broad mark or neutral zone between their and our possessions. They were willing furthermore to treat of impressment; but only on the basis of once a subject always a subject, at least, if native born; they would treat likewise of boundary revision without acquisition of new territory and of the fisheries.

It required several formal meetings to secure further definition. The barrier between Canada and the

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United States was to be the zone of Indian defense; in other words all that is now Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, most of Indiana and part of Ohio was to be delivered over to the Indians. To Gallatin's question it was replied that the white settlers must be left to the tender mercies of their foes and spared, if at all, by their own enterprise. As to boundary revision, parts of Maine and New Hampshire were to be Canadian, the forts at Niagara and Sackett's Harbor were to be dismantled, and the United States might never have an armed force on the Great Lakes or their tributaries as, on the other hand, Great Britain could and would. These points constituting an ultimatum, Adams drafted a lengthy refusal to treat: Gallatin stripped it of fury, Clay of rhetoric, Bayard of redundancy, while Russell edited spelling and punctuation. The original author could not recognize his own work; but it was sent as edited and preparations for departure were somewhat ostentatiously begun. Clay, the inveterate gambler, was convinced, and he alone, that the British would not call the bluff. The others believed honestly that all was over.

On August fourteenth, Castlereagh, with a retinue requiring twenty carriages for transportation, passed through the town on the way to the congress at Vienna. What he said to his commissioners does not appear but it somewhat changed their bearing. Adams' "patchwork," as he styled it, was speedily forwarded to Lon-

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don, and at the end of ten days the British admitted that the Indian zone was no longer a condition antecedent. Still our Americans stood firm; perhaps Clay was determined to force the British hand. Indeed, our envoys appear to have been full of the gambling spirit, and played of nights to pass the time. Adams ruefully records his losses to Clay; one session lasted the whole night. Again the British commission consulted "home" for instructions and had shamefacedly to admit that neither zone nor lake supremacy were indispensable, though the Indians must be made a party in the result of the negotiations.

Here was a tremendous concession, and that too in the face of continued military successes, well known to the exultant Britons and the depressed Americans alike. Yet our envoys kept right on with their card parties and discarded even these terms. The ponderous and voluminous Adams was excused from penning the rejoinder and Gallatin, indifferent to the puppets at Ghent, composed one for the consideration of the principals in the matter, the cabinet at London. Again there was the now usual intermission of negotiations. The dwellers on the corner of Fields and Fullers Streets grew nervous and touchy even for them: Clay and Adams came to an open explosive rupture and Russell hied him to a hotel for peace. But the solemn news that Washington had been captured and burned prevented utter dissolution. The fourth note of the Brit-

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ish was then delivered, and while our distracted, disjointed commission got together once more for business there was such serious friction that they are reported to have well nigh overlooked the further concession from England, contained in a polite suggestion that Messrs. Gambier, Goulburn and Adams must have overlooked or misunderstood the letter of their full power; what was wanted in the Indian matter was merely amnesty. This our bickering embassy refused to accept, and formally at that, in writing.

Adams had been led into temptation, but as he ruefully admits in his diary had not been delivered from evil. In spite of copious and assiduous Bible reading, five chapters in the New Testament every morning, he nevertheless haunted to excess, as he felt, theatrical shows and the gaming table. In his aleatory exercises he had lost much of his balance and at this juncture far outran the colder Clay in calling the adversary's hand. The rejoinder desired should be assigned to himself to write, dignified and long, with a convincing argument for the cession of all Canada! The brains of his colleagues literally reeled, but they managed to restrain his foolhardiness and commit the writing of a brief acceptance to Clay. Of course the Puritan patrician took exactly such liberties with this draft which he disliked in all its parts, as were regularly taken with his own. The result was a breach and considerable railing, the interchange of most un-

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complimentary language about Massachusetts and Kentucky respectively.

There was leisure to nurse grievances in the now customary long pause before return news from London. This time there came an imperative demand for a treaty on the basis of *uti possedetis;* retention, that is, of the territory each occupies when negotiation closes. The British held the Maine coast as far as the Penobscot and were encouraged by the skirmishes on the line of the Niagara river, and by the still dubious situation in the southwest. Our commissioners were exasperated by the new attitude, drew together, composed a defiant retort, and threatened a final rupture of negotiation. When their answer reached London it was laid before Wellington with the offer of supreme command in America. The duke would obey, of course, but like our commissioners he considered the British gains to be only temporary and thought the demand of his government excessive. It was accordingly withdrawn and the fact was known at Ghent on October thirty-first.

Meantime the American envoys had renewed their quarrels; Clay's pride was wounded by social neglect or oversight and Russell's by studied insult from the British and the Belgians, both being treated as if they were mere secretaries of Bayard, Adams and Gallatin. They withdrew from the American embassy, at least so far as to eat and lodge elsewhere. But there was

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a rejoinder to be written of course, and not only that, the British requested the draft of such a treaty as would be acceptable. Adams undertook the task, and with a statesman's skill and foresight proposed a peace on the basis of the *status quo ante*, restitution of territory and property, postponement of all disputes for later and peaceful negotiation. This would leave to the British their treaty right of navigating the Mississippi which Clay insisted should be unconditionally surrendered; it would also leave to the New England fishermen the right under the same treaty to fish on the banks as before, which with Adams was equally incontestable.

For a fortnight the American council table was a battle ground between the two: alike in personal and political hostility. But at the expiration of that term definite instructions embodying Adams' exact idea arrived from Washington, a staggering blow to Clay, who could no longer refuse his signature to the draft. There was not a syllable in the paper about the specific grievances we had regarded as a sufficient "casus belli": commercial oppression, blockades or impressment. It was on November twenty-sixth that the British envoys presented the reply from London; in it there was not a word about the fisheries. The British placed their own interpretation on our treaty rights in that respect, to wit: that war had ended the treaty of 1783 and we had no other. But there was a definite

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stipulation for the navigation of the Mississippi. This was more than Clay could endure; the great river did not rise in Canada as had been supposed in 1783, we now held not one but both banks, we owned the mouth and the great fertile valley was being settled by considerable numbers of Americans. Our contention was that the treaty of 1783, recognizing independence within certain definite boundaries, was permanent in all its parts, including both the fisheries and the Mississippi matter. But Clay believed his political future to be dependent on liberating the west and southwest from every remnant of British interference, and right or wrong, consistent or inconsistent, remained obdurate in his demand for their exclusion from use of the river.

Gallatin stood for the permanence of the existing treat of 1783 and wrote an article for the new one containing renewal both of British rights on the Mississippi and American rights in the fisheries. It was five days ere Clay could be brought by Gallatin to yield in any degree; while Adams, wounded again by the ruthless mutilation of his project and utterly outraged by Clay's demands, seemed incapable of controlling his temper to the extent of even arguing or consulting. The claim is made that Gallatin was the real framer of the treaty, and in some measure it has been generously admitted by Adams' descendants. Certainly Gallatin's tact, firmness, and reasonableness rendered him at this point the umpire of the embittered struggle.

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Clay's repute as an able compromiser is well known and the decision reached was his own. Gallatin's article was omitted from the project of the treaty, this Clay secured; but appended was a note explaining that in view of the permanence of existing treaty obligations it had not been thought necessary to mention the fisheries. In this he lost for it was really a proposed exchange of navigation for fishery rights. The Kentuckian thought the treaty a very bad one and said so in picturesque language.

Two weeks later the project was returned from London with many marginal annotations and an article securing to British subjects the river navigation. But, most significantly, there was blank silence about the fisheries. Adams was glad but Clay was mad, as never before. Again Gallatin resumed the rôle of mediator and played it superbly as before. On December first our commission made the formal tender of the barter which had previously been merely suggested. The reply was an offer to leave both questions open by formal agreement. Our rejoinder was to make mention of neither and this was accepted with a promptness expressing Great Britain's eagerness for peace. The treaty was signed on December 24, 1814.

The winter of that year was not a pleasant one in Europe and least of all in England. British merchants were clamorous for a complete renewal of trade after the long weary break, and their ships were a prey to

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our cruisers and privateers. Macdonough's victory on the lake had checked one body of Wellington's veterans at Plattsburg, another had sailed away disheartened from Baltimore, and the coming defeat of the third at New Orleans (January 8, 1815) was to restore American self-respect. But peace in America was desired by England chiefly because of the European congress at Vienna, where the most momentous decisions regarding Europe's immediate future were to be reached. Great Britain's radicals with their secret societies and inflammatory propaganda put Tory rule in jeopardy: and, while it was Waterloo which gave it a new lease of life, her statesmen were full of dark foreboding. Such energies as they had were liberated by the Treaty of Ghent, and it was with a sigh of immense relief that the country, unhampered from behind, could gird itself for the eastward strife in the Austrian capital. But there was no extraordinary jubilation; Great Britain was way worn and still had no vision of her journey's end.

Upon receipt of the news in America there was momentarily a frenzy of delight: the war was over, there was a peace. But the perusal of the treaty, article by article, reduced the blaze to smouldering embers and covered the land with a gray mist of smoke and vapor. The conflict was ended and there were not only no gains, but losses: unless exhausted quiet be a gain. There was still a treaty of commerce to be made and there was to be no payment of our spoliation claims:

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the fixing of our frontiers was to be entrusted to joint commissions meeting on British soil; we established no right whatever to the islands in the Bay of Fundy and no natural right to the fisheries in British waters. Where were the Free Trade and Sailors' Rights for which we went to war? No concession, no mention even of them. The West Indian trade was ours no more. Thus the Federalists in full cry, for political purposes; and the Republicans were silenced. It seems to have been felt that the initial demands of Great Britain were a preposterous bluff not to be reckoned at all in the balance sheet and it was not emphasized, indeed the public did not even notice, that she had secured no acknowledgment of any right to search our ships, impress our seamen or declare paper blockades; that in all likelihood the union had been saved from disruption—Massachusetts and Connecticut commissioners were in Washington when the news from Ghent arrived to demand a share of Federal taxes and the right to raise State armies: everybody forgot that at least some degree of commercial freedom, possibly absolute liberty and independence had been secured.

Many Americans harbor strange delusions about treaties. That of Ghent is lightly esteemed by the manufacturers of school books, as too is the previous one known as Jay's: simply because there is no buncombe in either. As late as the writer's boyhood we still used "readers" and "histories" made in New

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England: and indignantly bleated about search, impressment and blockades in our dialogues on the school rostrums. The truth is that there is permanence and binding validity in treaties in so far only and only in so far as there is in them the expression of a political and social permanence. The admirable principles of international relations, even that of neutrality, have always been forgotten and always will be by nations when maddened by the lust of conquest or the desperate struggle for self-preservation. So too when peace and reciprocal advantage make relations easy a minimum of treaty sanction is the best in controlling international intercourse. For this last reason the Treaty of Ghent is a great landmark, and for this reason only did it give us in the end all and more than we had contended for; arbitration has in the lapse of a century settled all those old disputes and others surcharged with even greater explosive force.

Perhaps our bickering negotiators in the dreary little Belgian town had prophetic vision, and perhaps John Quincy Adams, in spite of his lapses of temper and morals, was the clear-sighted lookout on the ship of state; let us permit them all to share not only in the manifest credit due to Gallatin and to Adams, but even in the supreme meed of honor as prophets in their own country. We cannot prove their deserts but we can admit them. The course of events has been on the side of Anglo-Saxon peace, a course

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laid and kept by pilots quite as wise, and look-outs quite as clear visioned as even Gallatin and Adams. These later statesmen braved for us the storms of British passion during our civil war, of Canadian resentment about the Alaska boundary and the fisheries question: their deserts in the development of mutual good will and understanding parallel those of the men who laid the footing stones and foundations. There is not and cannot be love between any two nations: nations have but one loadstar: self-interest, immediate or ultimate. The politician who discerns that star and steers discreetly for it is a statesman. There is not the slightest analogy between a man and a state. Men may practice the virtues of the decalogue, unselfishness and the love of neighbor; organized society doubtless will in the millennium but not before. Meantime the path-finders who patiently wait and leave the lapse of time to allay passion or clarify the mind are the true heroes of history. The council table requires a cool moral courage and an adroitness of demeanor which at least equal the cunning of the strategist or the swift decision of the general.

We think now, as we said at the beginning, that Clio does well to smile as she muses over the Treaty of Ghent. The whole course of the negotiation was a merry round. The concourse of its negotiators was amusing, their walk and conduct was as absurd at times as the flouncing of boarding-school boys. In the

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gray world of politics we have a right to enjoy the farcical interludes. But, masked as were the principals and their agents, behind their acting and frisking was heaviness of heart. What they achieved, however, was good and even great. That two great peoples should be celebrating the centennial of a treaty is a fact unique in history. The provisions of the treaty of Ghent have been stronger than alliances or ententes or understandings; they were intended to keep us apart, they have resulted in a hundred years of peace between the two branches of one of the great race-stocks of mankind.

Ed Lucas
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